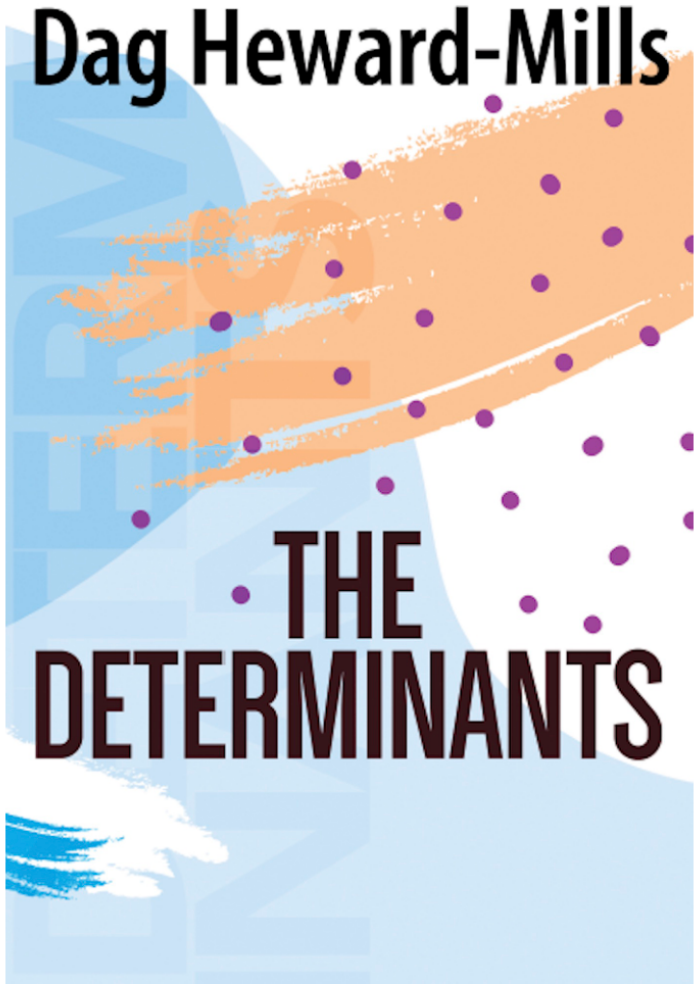
Dag Heward-Mills
THE DETERMINANTS

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The Determinants

First published 2019 by Parchment House

1st Printing 2019

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EBOOK ISBN: 978-1-64329-203-8

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Chapter 1

What Are Determinants?

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

The determinants are the characteristics and the virtues that determine the outcome of everything you do. Every area of life is therefore affected by determinants. Both spiritual and non-spiritual things are governed by determinants.

1. The outcome of your life is governed by the determinants.

2. The outcome of your ministry is governed by the determinants.

3. The outcome of your business is controlled by the determinants.

4. The outcome of your education is determined by the determinants.

5. The outcome of your marriage is determined by the determinants.

6. The outcome of your project is determined by the determinants.

7. The outcome of your relationships is determined by the determinants.

8. The outcome of your journey is determined by the determinants.

9. The outcome of this season is determined by the determinants.

10. The outcome of the crisis is determined by the determinants.

11. The outcome of your leadership is determined by the

determinants.

12. The outcome of your pastoral work is determined by the determinants.

13. The outcome of your calling is determined by the determinants.

14. The outcome of your career is determined by the determinants.

15. The outcome of your friendships is determined by the determinants.

16. The outcome of your job is determined by the determinants.

17. The outcome of your apostleship is determined by the determinants.

18. The outcome of your singing career is determined by the determinants.

19. The outcome of your crusade is determined by the determinants.

20. The outcome of your children is determined by the determinants.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Usually a number of factors are responsible for the success of any endeavour. It takes more than one thing to make anything work well. That is why the Bible says that "All things work together for good to them that love God." Good is accomplished by a number of things working together and not by one isolated factor.

A Common Mistake

Most people are impressed by one feature of a successful person. For instance, if a singer is successful, people may be impressed with

her voice. If a woman is successful, people may be impressed with her strength of character. People may be impressed with a boxer's strength. A successful pastor may be noted for his preaching style. A common mistake is to think that "one thing" has given rise to these successes. However, that is never the case.

The boxer you are impressed with may also be diligent, hardworking, consistent and even prayerful. He may also have been trained by a very good coach.

The pastor you are impressed with may have many hidden strengths, talents and practices that you do not know of. Since most of the pastor's life is hidden from your view, you are not likely to know all the other things that are working together for good to happen.

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

Ecclesiastes 9:11 is a simple scripture which teaches and declares that speed, strength, wisdom, understanding and skill usually determine the outcome of anything. This scripture also teaches that the common determinants of life can be set aside because time and chance could neutralize the effects of these determinants. God can intervene and cause you to have far more than you deserve. A powerful curse could also change the outcome you expect.

Indeed, how true that is! There are people who work hard and fast but are still very poor. There are many excellent singers who have amounted to nothing in this world. There are many powerful preachers who do not have much of a crowd to preach to. There are many excellent footballers who do not have a team to play in. It takes more than just being a good player to have a good outcome in your career.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 is a beautiful scripture and it reveals that speed often determines the winner of a race. (However, time and chance

once set aside all the known determinants of a race, when the slowest swimmer in an Olympic Game won the gold medal. All the other swimmers were disqualified by a false start and the slowest and poorest swimmer was the only one left to swim the several lengths and win the gold medal without a challenger).

Ecclesiastes 9:11 is a beautiful scripture because it reveals that strength usually determines the outcome of a battle (However, time and chance have occurred on several occasions and unexpected people, without much strength, have won amazing battles. Goliath was far stronger than David but the young boy killed the giant).

Ecclesiastes 9:11 is a beautiful scripture that teaches that wisdom and understanding are common determinants of prosperity. It reveals how people who have bothered to give themselves to learning and growing in understanding will prosper. (However, time and chance have also been known to wipe out the effect of these determinants. There are many learned professors who are very poor whilst some uneducated footballers are millionaires).

Ecclesiastes 9:11 is an amazing scripture because it shows how skill is a determinant of favour. Your skill determines how much people will choose or select you for anything. (Indeed, there are many skilled footballers, singers and dancers who are not chosen in spite of their talents).

We must therefore accept the revelation of Ecclesiastes that these things are the common determinants of life on earth. Speed, strength, wisdom, understanding, skill, time and chance are the common determinants. You must also be aware of the fact that there are things that can undo the effect of these powerful determinants.

This book is a study on the determinants identified by Solomon. It is important to know and understand the determinants identified by King Solomon. It is important to use these determinants to move your life forward. To ignore the power of the determinants is to ignore what usually governs and controls life on this earth.

The Bible is full of God's wisdom and direction for our lives. God's word is a prophecy that you will do well to take heed to. When you

take heed to the beautiful scriptures, you will become a wise man.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, which ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEE WISE unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:14-15

Chapter 2

The First Determinant: Speed

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. SPEED DETERMINES IF YOU WILL BUILD ANYTHING.

And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest. And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters. And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord.

And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, GO OUT UNTO THE CITIES OF JUDAH, AND GATHER OF ALL ISRAEL MONEY TO REPAIR THE HOUSE OF YOUR GOD FROM YEAR TO YEAR, AND SEE THAT YE HASTEN THE MATTER. HOWBEIT THE LEVITES HASTENED IT NOT.

And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the Lord, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim.

2 Chronicles 24:2-7

You need speed for building. Slow thinkers cannot build. Those who are slow to jump into action cannot build. Speed is necessary for the building of any house. The Levites were told to hasten the

matter of building. Without hastening the construction, you will not achieve anything.

I once belonged to a committee that was assigned to build something. At the very first meeting, a senior brother chided me for being over-eager to get on with the project. He said to me, "Young man, don't be in a hurry. Similar projects in other parts of the world have taken over three hundred years to build." Even though we could have achieved our goal within four years, the land for the project had not even been demarcated after three years.

Anyone who is experienced in construction will know how important speed is. Many good construction firms build both in the day and in the night. Speed cuts down cost. Speed eliminates waste. Speed surprises those who intend to oppose the project. Speed helps you overcome unforeseen and unavoidable delays.

2. SPEED DETERMINES IF YOU WILL GET MARRIED.

But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him. THEN ABIGAIL MADE HASTE, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

1 Samuel 25:15-18

Speed is necessary to avert many evils determined in your life. Abigail's speed saved her family's life and hers. Many times, evil comes into your life because you are too slow to prevent it. Abigail was fast! She realised that her husband had made a big mistake. She acted quickly, humbly and wisely. This turned away David's anger. She won his heart with her humility, her wisdom and her

offering.

When Abigail's husband died, David offered to marry her. Many times marriage is an act of pity and compassion. David had compassion and pity on this widow. Some modern women may not accept that being married is an act of God's compassion towards them. But it is!

Once again, Abigail was quick to act. With speed, she agreed to the new marriage. She said, "Yes" to King David. Some people would have said that she needed to have time to mourn her husband. If she had delayed in any way she may have remained a lonely widow for the rest of her life. Abigail's speed of thought determined her marriage to the king. Abigail's speed in taking decisions determined her status for the rest of her life.

And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. AND DAVID SENT AND COMMUNED WITH ABIGAIL, TO TAKE HER TO HIM TO WIFE. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, DAVID SENT US UNTO THEE, TO TAKE THEE TO HIM TO WIFE. And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. AND ABIGAIL HASTED, AND AROSE, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, AND BECAME HIS WIFE.

1 Samuel 25:39-42

3. SPEED DETERMINES WHOM YOU WILL HONOUR.

And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, LO, THREE MEN STOOD BY HIM: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest

yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

And ABRAHAM HASTENED INTO THE TENT UNTO SARAH, AND SAID, MAKE READY QUICKLY THREE MEASURES OF FINE MEAL, KNEAD IT, AND MAKE CAKES UPON THE HEARTH. AND ABRAHAM RAN unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

Genesis 18:1-7

Sara had to quickly prepare food to honour the angels who had come visiting. No one could determine how long these angels were going to hang around. There is no point in bringing the food when everyone is gone. Food that is served quickly is appreciated more than food that comes too late.

Speed is necessary in honouring God's servants. You may never get the chance to meet certain people again. There are people you may want to honour but cannot. They are gone forever and will not hear your nice words and tributes. If you have something to say, say it now. If you have something to do, do it now! Abraham made haste to honour the three angels that had come from heaven to bless him.

There are people that I am glad I honoured when I had the chance. I had one chance to honour Archbishop Idahosa and I did. He died two weeks after that opportunity came and passed. I wish my biological father were alive so I could honour him more than I did. But that opportunity is past. To honour someone requires a fast thinking mind. Slowness is one of the reasons why you may never honour someone.

4. SPEED DETERMINES THE FINANCIAL DISASTERS YOU WILL AVOID.

And when the morning arose, then THE ANGELS HASTENED LOT, SAYING, ARISE, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his

wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, ESCAPE FOR THY LIFE; LOOK NOT BEHIND THEE, neither stay thou in all the plain; ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAIN, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.

HASTE THEE, ESCAPE thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

Genesis 19:15-22

Lot had to run out of Sodom and Gomorrah. He needed speed to escape from ruin. In the same way, you will need to think and act fast if you are to escape financial destruction.

There are certain decisions that will save your life. However, if you take those decisions too late, you will be ruined. The man of speed will escape the evil of financial ruin. The man of speed will also avoid death. Speed is essential in avoiding financial disasters, poverty and debt. Many people are slow to believe that debt is an evil thing. By the time they accept the truth of the word, it is too late to prosper.

Giving mental assent to things without implementing them is a mistake. It is time to act fast. It is time to obey quickly. You must be quick to obey. You must be quick to believe if you are to avoid financial, marital and spiritual ruin. Speed determines your ability to win in the competition of life.

Speed determines whether you will win a race!

Speed determines whether you will be rich!

Speed determines whether you will be successful!

Speed determines what you will have!

Speed determines whether you will have financial increase!

5. SPEED DETERMINES IF YOU WILL BE BLESSED.

And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.

And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

Genesis 27:1-4

And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

And Isaac said unto his son, HOW IS IT THAT THOU HAST FOUND IT SO QUICKLY, my son? And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.

Genesis 27:19-20

Isaac asked for some food and it was Esau's duty to provide this food.

However, it was his brother Jacob who was quick to provide the food. The speed at providing the food is what got Jacob his blessing. The speed was made possible by the help of his mother. Speed is often a reflection of how much help you have. Speed is what gave Jacob the blessing. The blessings we see on the nation

Israel today are because of the speed of Jacob.

Perhaps your whole life will change if you can introduce some speed into what you do. Perhaps, some blessings will come to you if you would be faster at what you do. Be faster at taking decisions! Be faster at obeying God! Be faster at learning your songs! Be faster at waiting on God!

6. SPEED DETERMINES IF YOU WILL BE SAVED.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, ZACCHAEUS, MAKE HASTE, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. AND HE MADE HASTE, AND CAME DOWN, AND RECEIVED HIM JOYFULLY.

Luke 19:5-6

It is often difficult to be saved after a certain age. It is mostly young people who give their lives to Christ. Many people will not be converted if they do not quickly give their lives to Christ. From a certain age onwards, pride fills a man so much that he cannot learn anything new! He cannot believe in anything he has not believed from his youth. As time goes by, human beings are filled with an evil pride that makes them unyielding and unbelieving. This pride gets worse as people get older.

This is why it is important to be saved quickly. This is why it is important to reach out to the young ones with great speed.

Jesus told Zacchaeus to be quick. Make haste and come down. Today, salvation has come to you. When you hear the voice of God, be quick to obey. It is not just obedience that matters. It is how fast you obey that matters!

7. SPEED DETERMINES IF YOU WILL BE ANOINTED.

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

AND HE LEFT THE OXEN, AND RAN AFTER ELIJAH, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will

follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

And he returned back from him, and TOOK A YOKE OF OXEN, AND SLEW THEM, AND BOILED THEIR FLESH with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

1 Kings 19:19-21

There was no delay in Elisha's response to Elijah. Elisha ran after Elijah! Elisha did not walk slowly when he was going to see Elijah. He ran! Elisha did not tell Elijah that he would call him later.

Speed determines whether you will be anointed. Elisha's speed in responding to the call of God qualified him to receive the anointing. Elisha instantly turned away from secular work and slaughtered his valuable oxen. He instantly made himself jobless and ready for the work of God.

Today, many people delay in obeying the call of God. They hesitate! They will ask for a special meeting to discuss whether the call to ministry could be looked at again! They put brakes on the call of God.

They explain how they would have to do their Master's degree and their PhD before answering the call of God! "We will be ready for the call of God in a few years' time".

But it is not like that when it comes to the anointing. To catch the anointing you need speed. You need to put aside excuses. The anointing is the greatest thing you could ever have. The anointing does not wait for you. You must wait for the anointing. You must respond with speed. Speed is a determinant for whether people will be anointed or not.

Chapter 3

How to Improve Your Speed

And shall MAKE HIM OF QUICK UNDERSTANDING …

Isaiah 11:3

In order to improve your overall speed, you must improve your speed in key areas of your life.

1. Improve your speed of understanding.

And shall MAKE HIM OF QUICK UNDERSTANDING in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

Isaiah 11:3

Avoid long arguments that only destroy relationships. Become a person of quick understanding. Avoid long meetings! Try to think like your leader! If God has sent you, try to think the way God thinks. Let His mind be your mind. Try to understand the burden and the purpose that God has. What is God's burden today? God's burden is the salvation of the fallen human race! Jesus has sent us into the world to proclaim His word. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. God's heart is bleeding for the souls of pitiful human beings who are perishing all over the world today. Do not do anything that is different from the vision of the one who has sent you. Improve your speed of understanding. Try to follow his way. Try to think the way your leader is thinking.

2. Improve your speed of copying.

And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Matthew 4: 22

People who amount to something are fast at following. When you

are fast at following, you are fast at copying. Jesus always wanted people to cut out things that would delay them from following Him. Let the dead bury their dead. Just follow me. That is what Jesus said.

Most people are slow in copying others. That is why they never become great in any thing. Increase your speed by following and copying immediately.

All over the world, people who copy quickly are able to catch up. The Chinese, the Koreans and even the Europeans are well known for copying quickly and catching up with those ahead of them. Jesus is always saying, "Quickly follow me."

3. Improve your speed of implementation.

I made haste, and DELAYED NOT TO KEEP THY COMMANDMENTS.

Psalm 119:60

Speed is necessary in obeying God's instructions.

The accomplishments of Jehu are the best examples of speedy implementation. Jehu went straight to the point with a "waste-no-time", "take-no-prisoners" style of accomplishment. He accomplished the execution of two kings (Joram and Ahaziah), the execution of one queen (Jezebel), the execution of seventy sons (of Ahab) and the execution of one congregation (of Baal) in twenty-four hours.

Stop wasting time on your assignments. Get to the job and accomplish it immediately. Today! Now! Immediately! Straightaway! Start this minute! Instantly! Increase your speed!

And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, I HAVE ANOINTED THEE KING OVER THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD, EVEN OVER ISRAEL. AND THOU SHALT SMITE THE HOUSE OF AHAB thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants

of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel.

For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel: And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah: And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door, and fled.

2 Kings 9:6-10

4. Improve your speed of finishing.

In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and TO FINISH HIS WORK.

John 4:31-34

In order to increase your speed of finishing, follow the example of Jesus Christ! Jesus was urgent about finishing His work. He would cut out meals and anything that would keep Him from finishing His work. You must cut out certain things from your life if you are to finish your work.

The reason why people do not finish their work is because they do many things that are not their job. There are things that only you can do. Get to the job and concentrate on it!

Never stop until you finish. Unfinished things cannot be used. A car that has only three wheels cannot be used. If you do many great things but do not finish your work, you are still a failure. Why create a beautiful car with only three tyres? Stop saying, "I just need to get one more tyre." We cannot use your nice car that has only three tyres. No one is saying that you have not worked hard. Unfinished work is simply unusable. This is why Jesus was so intent on finishing His work. If He had preached and healed the sick but had not gone to the cross, the world would still not be saved.

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 4:34

Chapter 4

The Second Determinant: Strength

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the STRONG, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. Strength determines the quality of your leadership.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. THE LORD SHALL SEND THE ROD OF THY STRENGTH OUT OF ZION: RULE THOU IN THE MIDST OF THINE ENEMIES.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Psalms 110:1-3

Many people are not good leaders because they do not have the strength to take good decisions. When Joshua was made the leader of Israel, he was told to be strong. Why is that? Strength determines the quality of your leadership. Weak leaders give rise to lots of confusion.

BE STRONG and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. ONLY BE THOU STRONG and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make

thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Have not I commanded thee? BE STRONG and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 1:6-9

2. Strength determines your ability to fight against your enemy.

And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and FOR STRENGTH TO THEM THAT TURN THE BATTLE TO THE GATE.

Isaiah 28:6

The man of strength is able to turn the battle to the gates: your strength determines if the battle will turn to the gates of the enemy. Strength determines a person's ability to fight. There are many good fights in this life. A good fight is a fight for something good. A good fight is a worthy fight. Strength determines a person's ability to persist in a fight. Strength determines a person's ability to survive. Strength determines a person's ability to win.

3. Your strength determines whether your enemy will attack you or not.

Or LET HIM TAKE HOLD OF MY STRENGTH, THAT HE MAY MAKE PEACE WITH ME; and he shall make peace with me.

Isaiah 27:5

The decision to fight you, the decision to oppose you, the decision to attack you are all based on your perceived strength. The man of strength will force enemies to make peace with him. Your strength will determine those who choose to be at peace with you. Your strength determines your ability to persist in the fight.

4. Your strength determines your level of obedience to God.

And MOSES CALLED UNTO JOSHUA, AND SAID UNTO HIM IN

THE SIGHT OF ALL ISRAEL, BE STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Deuteronomy 31:7-8

Strength determines your ability to obey God. Your strength determines your compliance with the visions of God. It is weakness that makes people shift away from the will of God. Both Moses and Joshua were exhorted to be strong so that they could fulfil the call of God and be obedient in the ministry. Weaklings cannot serve God. It takes strength to obey God. Because you are strong you will not turn away from the call of God.

A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any;

Proverbs 30:30

5. Your strength determines your ability to overcome fear.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 1:9

Fear is a sign of your weakness. Women are often fearful. Fear reveals the weakness in your mind. Insecurities are fears that have gone wild, fears that are uncontrolled.

6. Your strength determines the extent to which people follow you.

Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: ONLY BE STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE.

Joshua 1:18

People follow you because they sense your strength. People stop following you when they sense you are weak.

7. The man of strength achieves his strength through the having of sons. Sons are men who are forever with you. They are men whom you have forgiven.

Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. REUBEN, THOU ART MY FIRSTBORN, MY MIGHT, AND THE BEGINNING OF MY STRENGTH, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

Genesis 49:2-3

Your strength is determined by your sons! Your strength is determined by how many sons you have. If you have more sons in ministry, you are a stronger minister.

Behold, I and THE CHILDREN WHOM THE LORD HATH GIVEN ME ARE FOR SIGNS AND FOR WONDERS in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

Isaiah 8:18

8. Your strength is determined by how much accusation you can withstand.

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: BUT HIS BOW ABODE IN STRENGTH, AND THE ARMS OF HIS HANDS WERE MADE STRONG BY THE HANDS OF THE MIGHTY GOD OF JACOB; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Genesis 49:22-24

The man of strength is capable of surviving accusations and hatred. Your strength is also determined by how long you can withstand accusations. Joseph was a man who withstood accusations and hatred for many years.

9. The man of strength will be able to come out of difficult places.

And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; FOR BY STRENGTH OF HAND THE LORD BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM THIS PLACE: there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

Exodus 13:3

Your strength is determined by what situations you successfully come out of. Your strength determines your ability to wipe out significant enemies of your life. Your strength determines your ability to outlast your enemy in the battles of life.

And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, BY STRENGTH OF HAND THE LORD BROUGHT US OUT from Egypt, from the house of bondage: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for BY STRENGTH OF HAND THE LORD BROUGHT US FORTH out of Egypt.

Exodus 13:14-16

10. Your strength determines whether people cheat you or not. The stronger you are the less likely people will be able to cheat you.

And she answered him, nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly.

And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

HOWBEIT HE WOULD NOT HEARKEN UNTO HER VOICE: BUT, BEING STRONGER THAN SHE, FORCED HER, AND LAY WITH

HER.

2 Samuel 13:12-14

11. Your strength determines how much you will be able to help others.

Most people are not able to help anyone else because they are not strong.

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Romans 15:1

12. Your strength determines your exploits. Men of strength do great exploits!

And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that DO KNOW THEIR GOD SHALL BE STRONG, AND DO EXPLOITS.

Daniel 11:32

Chapter 5

Men of Strength You Can Follow

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the STRONG, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. Joseph was a man of strength. He survived many accusations. May you survive all the suspicions and accusations levelled against you! You are a winner and you have the upper hand. Whatever campaign is going on to smear your name and bring you to shame will not succeed. You are declared a winner!

JOSEPH is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But HIS BOW ABODE IN STRENGTH, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Genesis 49:22-24

2. Samson was a man of strength. He crushed the enemy. May you crush the enemy in your life! May you become a man of strength! Let your enemies be afraid of you! Let the sound of your name bring fear into the heart of your enemy!

And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.

Judges 16:5

3. Saul and Jonathan were strong. They won wars for Israel.

May you win many wars for Jesus!

SAUL AND JONATHAN were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they WERE STRONGER THAN LIONS.

2 Samuel 1:23

4. David was strong. David was a fighter and a killer of the enemy. May your enemies perish because of your strength!

For THOU HAST GIRDED ME WITH STRENGTH to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.

2 Samuel 22:40

5. Uzziah was strong.

And UZZIAH prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he WAS STRONG.

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

2 Chronicles 26:14-16

Chapter 6

How to Improve Your Strength

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the STRONG, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. Make God your strength. Trust in His mercy. When you trust in other things you become weaker.

The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, THIS IS THE MAN THAT MADE NOT GOD HIS STRENGTH; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

Psalm 52:6-8

2. Receive counsel from God. Receive God as your covering. Strengthen yourself in God and not with the world. When you seek to strengthen yourself through Pharaoh, you are seeking to strengthen yourself with the world. The world can never be a source of strength for the believer. Your real protection is from God. Your strength is from the counsel, the covering, and the source you have. Strengthening yourself in God protects you from shame and confusion.

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; TO STRENGTHEN THEMSELVES IN THE STRENGTH OF PHARAOH, AND TO TRUST IN THE SHADOW OF EGYPT! THEREFORE SHALL THE STRENGTH OF PHARAOH BE YOUR SHAME, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

Isaiah 30:1-3

3. Strengthen yourself by returning and resting in God. By staying quietly in the presence of God you become much stronger.

For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; IN RETURNING AND REST shall ye be saved; IN QUIETNESS AND IN CONFIDENCE SHALL BE YOUR STRENGTH: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT WAIT FOR HIM.

Isaiah 30:15-18

Chapter 7

The Third Determinant: Wisdom

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the WISE, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. Wisdom determines your position and rank in your nation. Joseph's wisdom determined who he became in the land of Egypt. Through wisdom, you will become an important person in your country. You are going to be a prominent and honourable person in your nation, through the wisdom of God.

And Pharaoh said unto his servants, can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? AND PHARAOH SAID UNTO JOSEPH, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, THERE IS NONE SO DISCREET AND WISE AS THOU ART: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 41:38-41

Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: SHE SHALL BRING THEE TO HONOUR, when thou dost embrace her.

Proverbs 4:8

2. Wisdom determines your ability to stay in an elevated position. Through wisdom, you will remain in your exalted position. You will not go up and come down suddenly. Through wisdom, whatever God has given you will be preserved. David was able to sustain his newfound national hero status. He remained a hero till he died because he behaved himself wisely. Indeed, it is

wisdom that makes you stable.

And DAVID BEHAVED HIMSELF WISELY in all his ways; and the LORD was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

1 Samuel 18:14-15

And WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE THE STABILITY OF THY TIMES, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

Isaiah 33:6

3. Wisdom determines your place in ministry. Paul's wisdom determined his place in ministry. Your wisdom will determine how far you will go in ministry. It is only through wisdom that you can build a ministry that will outlast you.

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother PAUL ALSO ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN UNTO HIM hath written unto you;

2 Peter 3:15

4. Your wisdom determines your ability to work in important places. Wisdom determines your ability to prosper in the midst of kings, foreigners and even politicians.

And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: THEREFORE STOOD THEY BEFORE THE KING. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Daniel 1:19-20

5. Wisdom determines the great things and mighty works you can accomplish. Wisdom is the source of mighty works. Wisdom was the mysterious key that God used to create the world. His works are works of wisdom. Nature is a work of wisdom. The

planets, the moon and the stars are works of wisdom. The rivers, the lakes, the waterfalls, the clouds, the rainfall and the snow are all works of wisdom. The plains, the deserts, the swamps, the forests, the mountains, the hills are amazing works of wisdom. How manifold are thy works! This means, "how plentiful are God's works". Indeed, He made them all through wisdom.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! IN WISDOM HAST THOU MADE them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Psalms 104:24

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? And what WISDOM IS THIS WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO HIM, THAT EVEN SUCH MIGHTY WORKS are wrought by his hands?

Mark 6:2

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

Proverbs 3:19

6. Wisdom determines whether you will be called for or ever chosen. It was the wisdom of God that brought up the name of Daniel when there was a crisis in Babylon. Daniel was highly recommended as someone who could solve the problem. Daniel was called for. They will call for you!

THERE IS A MAN IN THY KINGDOM, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: NOW LET DANIEL BE CALLED,

AND HE WILL SHEW THE INTERPRETATION.

Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

Daniel 5:11-14

7. Wisdom determines your ability to rule.

By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Proverbs 8:16

And GOD GAVE SOLOMON WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING EXCEEDING MUCH, AND LARGENESS OF HEART, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And SOLOMON'S WISDOM EXCELLED THE WISDOM OF ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE EAST COUNTRY, AND ALL THE WISDOM OF EGYPT. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

1 Kings 4:29-34

Your wisdom determines your ability to lead. When an unwise man is put in charge, the whole system disintegrates under his leadership. It is wisdom and not brutality that makes a man stable in his leadership.

Poor leaders lack the wisdom to accommodate everyone. In the secular world, such people become dictators and murderers. In the church, such people drive away valuable members. Those who lack

wisdom are loners with no one to help them. Receive the wisdom of Solomon to have a large heart with good leadership!

8. Wisdom determines your ability to become rich.

SO KING SOLOMON EXCEEDED ALL THE KINGS OF THE EARTH FOR RICHES AND FOR WISDOM. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. AND THE KING MADE SILVER TO BE IN JERUSALEM AS STONES, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.

And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

1 Kings 10:23-29

Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

Proverbs 8:18

Your wisdom determines your level of riches and prosperity. The wisdom of African leaders has determined the poverty that is experienced there. Most African leaders have the kind of wisdom that creates poverty for everyone under them.

Poverty and riches are indices of wisdom. Your wisdom is how you think, how you plan and how you decide. Poor people often plan in a particular way and take decisions in a particular way. The

wisdom to produce mobile phones, televisions, radios and cars is greater than the wisdom needed to produce groundnuts, tomatoes and pepper.

Someone who harvests red peppers cannot be compared with someone who makes mobile phones. The wisdom needed for these two activities is vastly different and the wealth that these two activities generate is also vastly different.

9. Wisdom determines the length of life.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. …Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

Proverbs 3:13, 16

The Bible is clear about how wisdom gives the length of days. Indeed, countries like Japan and Switzerland have life expectancies of eighty years and above. Unfortunately, many poorer countries have a much shorter life expectancy.

Poor countries do not use wisdom to invent, create, manufacture or export anything. Such countries cannot even sustain chicken farms. Poor countries cannot even have rice farms. The wisdom to create and run a large farm is simply not there. Indeed, the health sector of poor nations is equally undeveloped.

Chapter 8

The Men of Wisdom You Can Follow

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the WISE, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. **Jesus was wise.** Although He was a young man, He was filled with the wisdom of God. He knew things that even old people did not know. He spoke with great maturity and He spoke beautiful words. The people marvelled, "What wisdom is this?" I prophesy that you will become a man of wisdom. You will accomplish great things. Mighty things will be done in your ministry and many fruits will be borne for the Lord.

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Mark 6:2

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

1 Corinthians 1:30

2. **Solomon was wise.** He built the house of God and he built his own house. Whatever keeps you out of the wisdom of Solomon is broken down now in the Name of Jesus! Receive Solomonic wisdom that you might build houses and build churches! I curse the spirit of impractical things. I bring down the demon of unachievable goals! I come against every idealistic and unreal vision that prevents you from achieving great things for God!

And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

1 Kings 10:24

3. **David was wise.** He had the wisdom of an angel of God. He knew many things and prepared for the future. He survived many battles and won many wars for the people of God. His leadership of Israel has never been forgotten and no king ever came near to his stature. Even until this day, David's name stands out in the history of Israel.

May your name stand out in the history of your nation. May your leadership skills improve from now onwards. May you be a person who unites rather than divides! Through you, may many people become wealthy and may the church become famous through your ministry!

To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and MY LORD IS WISE, ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM OF AN ANGEL OF GOD, to know all things that are in the earth.

2 Samuel 14:20

4. **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were wise.** These three men were anointed to work in the king's house. Few people can work close to a king. It takes a special grace to stay so close. Receive the anointing of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and become a person who is chosen to work in the highest place of all. May you walk in the corridors of power and fellowship with kings all the days of your life and ministry!

Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. . . And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Daniel 1:4, 20

5. **Paul was wise.** This great apostle wrote half of the New Testament. You cannot be a Christian and not read from this great apostle. You cannot even understand what it means to be a Christian unless you read Ephesians, Philippians, Corinthians and Romans. The wisdom of Paul is read and discussed in every church every week. There is no day that goes by on this earth without Paul's writing being read somewhere on the globe. Receive the worldwide ministry of writing books! Receive the wisdom that Paul had! Wisdom was the determinant that made Paul stand out.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, AS A WISE MASTERBUILDER, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1 Corinthians 3:10

6. **Bezaleel was wise.** Bezaleel was a skilful builder of the tabernacle. Receive the ability to build beautiful places where the glory of God will dwell. You are called to build many things for Jesus! The great grace that was on Bezaleel will be upon your life. Receive great opportunities to do great things for God.

Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded.

Exodus 36:1

7. **Joshua was wise**. He took over from Moses and led the remnants of Israel into the Promised Land. He went places that he had never been to before. How can you go forward in a place you have not been to before? Joshua was wise to follow the instructions of the Lord. God asked him to read his Bible and meditate. Meditation was the key to Joshua's military success and wisdom. Meditating on the word of God and being a stickler for obedience to the Lord was key to Joshua's amazing success in the Promised Land.

And Joshua the son of Nun was FULL OF THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel

hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:9

Chapter 9

How to Improve Your Wisdom

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:5

The Steps to Knowledge:

How to Develop into a Man of Knowledge and Wisdom

1. NOTICING, RECOGNIZING things is the first step to gaining knowledge. People who lack wisdom do not notice things.

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, WHAT THOU SEEST, WRITE IN A BOOK, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Revelation 1:11

Monkeys lack the ability to point out things to their children. The inability to notice things, to point things out, to acknowledge things and to reward great achievements is a sign of mental deficiency. Nations that do not reward successful people, but rather punish them, reveal a deep-seated deficiency.

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, THOU HAST WELL SEEN: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

Jeremiah 1:11-12

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, WHICH WE HAVE SEEN with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2. CONSIDERING, THINKING, MEDITATING is a step to wisdom.

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. THEN I SAW, AND CONSIDERED IT WELL: I LOOKED UPON it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 24:30-34

People who do not think deeply cannot become wise. To think, to calculate and to meditate is an important activity that is lacking in people who are not wise. People who are not wise run from activity to activity without thinking deeply.

3. ACKNOWLEDGING AND HONORING is a step to knowledge.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for SHE CAME FROM THE UTMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH TO HEAR the wisdom of Solomon; and, BEHOLD, A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE.

Luke 11:31

Great achievers should be recognized and honoured. It is a sign of dwelling in an intelligent community. Albert Einstein, the great physicist, released some scientific papers of his theories in 1905. Amazingly, at the time when people did not fully understand the implications of his discoveries and calculations, he was hailed, acknowledged and recognized.

He became a worldwide celebrity by the age of forty. He was honoured for his achievements. He was living in an enlightened society that could recognise a great achievement. He toured the world giving lectures on his calculations and theories of relativity. I do not think that if he had discovered these theories in certain

places, he would have been thanked or even recognized.

4. LISTENING AND HEARING is the next step to knowledge.

But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days THEY FOUND HIM IN THE TEMPLE, SITTING IN THE MIDST OF THE DOCTORS, BOTH HEARING THEM, AND ASKING THEM QUESTIONS. AND ALL THAT HEARD HIM WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS UNDERSTANDING AND ANSWERS. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, how is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Luke 2:44-51

Anyone who listens is receiving knowledge and wisdom. Jesus Christ listened to the seniors in the temple. That is how He became so wise. Those who do not listen to preaching messages are not wise. The more you listen to the word of God, the more you become wise.

5. ASKING QUESTIONS is the next step to knowledge.

But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days THEY FOUND HIM IN THE TEMPLE, SITTING IN THE MIDST OF THE DOCTORS, BOTH HEARING THEM, AND ASKING THEM QUESTIONS. AND ALL THAT HEARD HIM WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS UNDERSTANDING AND ANSWERS. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I

have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Luke 2:44-51

Those who ask questions are clearing cobwebs from their minds. Those who do not ask questions live in a bubble of pride and foolishness. They are too proud to ask what they obviously do not know. Rise out of your bubble of pride and begin to ask questions. The more questions you ask, the more intelligent you are. If Jesus asked questions why do you not also ask questions? Your inability to ask questions simply reveals pride and a growing ignorance.

6. UNDERSTANDING is the next step to wisdom.

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, AND UNDERSTANDETH IT NOT, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet HATH HE NOT ROOT IN HIMSELF, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Matthew 13:19-21

When people do not ask questions, they often do not gain understanding. Knowing something in a shallow way is very different from knowing something in great depth. People who argue a lot over little points reveal a lack of understanding. Failing to ask questions is the master key to remaining in the realm of a lack of understanding.

The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding SHALL REMAIN in THE CONGREGATION OF THE DEAD.

Proverbs 21:16

7. COPYING is a big step to acquiring knowledge and wisdom.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HATH ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HATH SENT ME TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED, TO PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERING OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THEM THAT ARE BRUISED, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and WONDERED AT THE GRACIOUS WORDS which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, is not this Joseph's son?

Luke 4:16-22

Most things cannot be understood in their entirety. When you start to copy and do things that others are doing, you begin to grow in understanding. It is as you obey that you understand the reason why things are done in a certain way.

The first sermon of Jesus was from the teachings of Isaiah. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18) People were so impressed with Jesus that they wondered at His gracious words. His gracious words were simply a copy of Isaiah's message. I honestly struggle to understand why people want to be original when Jesus simply copied the message of Isaiah.

John the Baptist was also successful in ministry because he copied Isaiah's message. John the Baptist had no desire to come up with an original message. It is amazing that you want to be an original.

Dear friend, begin to copy and imitate great servants of God. That is the way to surge forward and catch up. Stop the nonsense of trying to be an original. Remember that there is nothing new under the sun. That which has been is that which shall be!

Chapter 10

The Fourth Determinant: Understanding

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of UNDERSTANDING, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

The fourth determinant is understanding. Understanding is very different from knowledge or wisdom. The importance of understanding is best seen by its absence. People without understanding are different from people without wisdom. People without understanding are different from people without knowledge. Indeed, people without understanding are stubborn and difficult to relate with. It is not easy to have a good relationship with someone who lacks understanding.

Most people understand just what they have experienced. If they have experienced what it is to be a woman, they really understand women's issues but have no understanding about what it means to be a man. If they have been to prison before, they have a great understanding about what it means to be a prisoner and then they start a prisons ministry. If they have had a strange disease, they have great empathy for those with that condition. They go ahead and start special clubs and groups for fellow sufferers. Most of the time, people understand what they have experienced. Poor people empathise with other hungry people.

Jesus was different! He understood things He had never experienced. That makes Him God. He said, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matthew 25:42-43).

Jesus taught us to care for all these difficult situations caused mostly by poverty. Even though he had not been to prison and had never been sick, he showed understanding and compassion about the great difficulties such people experience. Most people who have started prison ministries have been to prison before. It is only when people get into certain circumstances that they begin to understand.

Understanding makes you a nice person. Understanding makes you a kind person. Understanding makes you a lovely person. Understanding makes you attractive. With all your getting, you must get understanding! Understanding is a very important thing to acquire.

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and WITH ALL THY GETTING GET UNDERSTANDING.

Proverbs 4:7

In this section, I want us to focus on the effects of living without understanding. Not being able to relate with things you have not experienced, is the same as not having understanding.

1. A lack of understanding is a terrible deficiency. Jesus was grieved when He met people who lacked understanding.

And Jesus said, Are ye also yet WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING?

Matthew 15:16

2. The prophets were grieved when the people of God lacked understanding.

Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

Jeremiah 5:21

3. It is prophesied that people will be deficient in understanding. They will not want to retain God in their thoughts. They will lack empathy. They will lack grace. They will be without understanding because it is one of the tragedies of the

human race. The lack of understanding is in the list of the most terrible evils to befall mankind.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Romans 1:28-31

Chapter 11

What Understanding Determines

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of UNDERSTANDING, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. Your understanding determines your ability to know what time it is.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

1 Chronicles 12:32

2. Your understanding determines your ability to get a husband. Abigail was able to have two husbands in quick succession. Most women are fortunate to have one husband. Abigail had two husbands because she was a woman of good understanding.

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was A WOMAN OF GOOD UNDERSTANDING, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

1 Samuel 25:3

3. Your understanding determines whether you will be shown mercy or not. The man of understanding has made himself capable of receiving mercy and favour; understanding determines the favour you receive from men, whether people choose you or not.

When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: FOR IT IS A PEOPLE OF NO UNDERSTANDING: THEREFORE HE THAT MADE THEM WILL NOT HAVE MERCY ON THEM, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

Isaiah 27:11

4. Your understanding determines your ability to fulfil your calling.

The EYES OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED; THAT YE MAY KNOW WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Ephesians 1:18

5. Your understanding determines your ability to keep poverty away. A good understanding is a master key to your protection against the invasion of poverty.

I went by the field of the slothful, and by THE VINEYARD OF THE MAN VOID OF UNDERSTANDING; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 24:30-34

6. Your understanding determines your ability to lead. It is the master key to good leadership. Bad leadership is characterized by oppression.

THE PRINCE THAT WANTETH UNDERSTANDING IS ALSO A GREAT OPPRESSOR: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

Proverbs 28:16

7. Your understanding determines how self-controlled you are.

HE THAT IS SLOW TO WRATH IS OF GREAT UNDERSTANDING: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

Proverbs 14:29

8. Your understanding determines your ability to keep away from wrong relationships with women.

And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, A YOUNG MAN VOID OF UNDERSTANDING, PASSING THROUGH THE STREET NEAR HER CORNER; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

Proverbs 7:7-10

9. Your understanding determines your ability to receive advice when it is given. Never advise a person who lacks understanding.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; AND A MAN OF UNDERSTANDING SHALL ATTAIN UNTO WISE COUNSELS:

Proverbs 1:5

10. Your understanding determines whether you will be exalted and promoted.

For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.

Job 17:4

11. Your understanding determines whether you can have a teaching ministry or not.

And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. AND THEY THAT UNDERSTAND AMONG THE PEOPLE SHALL INSTRUCT MANY: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

Daniel 11:32-33

12. Understanding determines how we shall relate with you.
People who lack understanding must be controlled with brute force. A person who lacks understanding must be treated like an animal.

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

Psalms 32:9

Chapter 12

What Happens to People Who Lack Understanding

And Jesus said, are ye also yet WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING?

Matthew 15:16

1. A man without understanding must be given hard commands and instructions.

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

Psalms 32:9

You must be hard on someone who lacks understanding. A person who lacks understanding is stubborn. A person who lacks understanding is slow to turn and slow to yield. A person who lacks understanding cannot be spoken to gently. He understands nothing. Do not invite him for an executive meeting. He will not fit in. He is of a different cut. He must be forced to comply and brought into subjection.

However, if you are dealing with a man of understanding, you must not use force. A man of understanding will be driven away by the use of force.

In my work as a leader, I have encountered many people who lack understanding. They just have to be told what to do.

You cannot leave anything to chance when you are dealing with someone who lacks understanding. A man that lacks understanding is like a horse or a mule that must be controlled. He must be controlled with force and strength because he will not understand what he must do.

You cannot explain a concept or a vision to a man without understanding and expect him to know what to do. He needs clear instructions to be able to do well. A man who lacks understanding is not necessarily an evil person. He works best with commands, instructions and strong directives. You cannot expect a man who lacks understanding to know what to do. You must always ask yourself whom you are dealing with. Is this a person who needs commands or is this a person whom you can leave to work things out?

2. A man without understanding does not naturally know what he must do.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that HAD UNDERSTANDING of the times, TO KNOW WHAT ISRAEL OUGHT TO DO; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

1 Chronicles 12:32

3. A lack of understanding makes you unable to occupy important positions.

Give therefore thy servant AN UNDERSTANDING HEART TO JUDGE THY PEOPLE, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

1 Kings 3:9

A lack of understanding makes you unable to occupy important positions. When a person without understanding is put in charge of things, he will destroy everything. This is why Solomon prayed for understanding when he was made the head of Israel. It is only with understanding that your feet can fit into the big shoes of honour.

I once put some pastors in charge of an existing church. Because they lacked understanding they began to quarrel amongst themselves. They began to bicker among themselves. They were in constant contention about who was more important and who should preach. It was sad to watch as these immature pastors displayed a gross lack of understanding. They did not understand

that they were all the same and were all being given the privilege of being in charge of something great that existed before they came on the scene. They did not understand that the greatness they were enjoying was not of their own doing. It is sad when you put a person without understanding into an honoured position.

Vashti was someone who did not understand her great position. She had gotten used to the glory of the throne. She did not understand that her greatness was only because she was married to the king. She did not understand that the king had a choice. It was her privilege to be called his wife. People without understanding must not be put into high up positions. They will simply mess things up.

4. A lack of understanding makes you not to be chosen.

GOOD UNDERSTANDING GIVETH FAVOUR: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Proverbs 13:15

This scripture clearly teaches us that having a good understanding will cause you to receive favour. A man was over fifty years old and had to choose a new wife because his first wife had gone to be with the Lord. He was not interested in any of the pretty young girls who were all around him. The people in his life tried to get him to marry but he simply did not want to marry any of the pretty fresh virgins who were dying for him to choose then.

One day, he chose an older, weather-beaten lady who no one expected him to choose. Everyone was shocked. "Why did you choose this woman with a big stomach when there are all these fresh-looking ladies in the church?"

He simply answered, "It is about understanding. These young ones will not understand my life. They do not understand a man and they will not understand an older man. I want someone who understands me and understands what I want." Indeed, the lady he married was like a weather-beaten eagle. But with time, it was clear that he had chosen well because the new weather-beaten lady with the big stomach understood the needs of the man she had married.

5. A lack of understanding will not allow you to be near or close to important people.

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, LEST THEY COME NEAR UNTO THEE.

Psalms 32:9

A lack of understanding will not let you be close to important people. If you want to be close to an important person, you must be a man of understanding. A person without understanding will not know why you are eating chicken. A person without understanding will not know why you have a certain type of car. A person who lacks understanding will not know why you have a certain amount of money. A person without understanding will not appreciate why you have certain people working with you.

A person without understanding will not understand why you have a bodyguard. A person without understanding will not understand why you come and go at the time you do. A person without understanding will criticize things he does not understand. You do not want to be near a person without understanding. You will feel uneasy. He will never understand why you have the privileges you have. You will have a thousand meetings to explain things but he will still not get it. The Bible is clear, "lest they come near unto thee."

And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and ZABUD the son of Nathan was principal officer, and THE KING'S FRIEND:

1 Kings 4:5

A lack of understanding will not allow you to be a friend of the great.

Your presence brings uneasiness. When Ham came close to Noah, he only criticized his father. Why would you want someone like that near you? King Solomon had many workers but we only hear of Zabud as the king's friend. Zabud had certain qualities that made Solomon choose him. Solomon chose him and brought him

closer than a normal employee.

6. A lack of understanding makes you less valuable than others.

And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Daniel 1:20

When you have a greater understanding you are more valuable. A lack of understanding makes you unable to hold senior and elevated positions. Although nurses and doctors study similar things in school, doctors have a far higher understanding of the same subjects. Both doctors and nurses study anatomy, physiology, medicine, surgery, pharmacy, etc. But doctors have a far greater understanding of these same subjects. Doctors are therefore paid much more than nurses. When you have a greater understanding of something you are more valuable.

The young men in Babylon were found to be ten times better in understanding and wisdom. They were ten times more valuable. They were elevated by the king and brought close and made to work in positions that were far higher than those of ordinary slaves.

7. A lack of understanding makes you proud and argumentative.

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she WAS A WOMAN OF GOOD UNDERSTANDING, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb. . . .

And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, WHO IS DAVID? AND WHO IS THE SON OF JESSE? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

1 Samuel 25:3, 10

Abigail was a woman of good understanding. Her husband, Nabal,

did not have that characteristic. She is the one who understood that David and his men were the reason why they were so prosperous and blessed. Nabal could not see the connection between David's activities and his prosperity. She was the one who understood that they owed him something.

People who lack understanding are ungrateful and argumentative. They will have long discussions and arguments because they simply cannot see through the maze. They do not understand how things work. They do not understand how things are achieved. They are like brute beasts. Discussions do not lead anywhere. Meetings take forever. Arguments are heated and longwinded.

Chapter 13

The Men of Understanding You Can Follow

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus

Luke 1:3

1. Jesus was a man of understanding and He saved the whole world.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

Isaiah 11:1-3

2. Solomon was a man of understanding and became the richest man in the world.

And GOD GAVE SOLOMON WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

1 Kings 4:29

3. Hiram was a man of understanding and helped to build the temple of God.

And king Solomon sent and fetched HIRAM OUT OF TYRE. He was

a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and HE WAS FILLED WITH WISDOM, AND UNDERSTANDING, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work

1 Kings 7:13-14

4. The children of Issachar were men that had understanding and knew what to do.

And of THE CHILDREN OF ISSACHAR, which WERE MEN THAT HAD UNDERSTANDING of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

1 Chronicles 12:32

5. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were men of understanding and withstood an evil king.

Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. . .

And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Daniel 1:4, 20

6. Daniel was a man of understanding and became a national hero.

There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and UNDERSTANDING and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers;

Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and

understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

Daniel 5:11-12

7. Luke was a man of understanding and wrote an important book.

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, HAVING HAD PERFECT UNDERSTANDING of all things from the very first, TO WRITE UNTO THEE in order, most excellent Theophilus,

Luke 1:1-3

Chapter 14

How to Improve Your Understanding

It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus

Luke 1:3

1. You can improve your understanding by going over and over the same thing.

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh THE WICKED ONE, AND CATCHETH AWAY THAT WHICH WAS SOWN in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Matthew 13:18-19

Those who do not understand are those that the wicked ones come to catch that which is sown in their hearts. Continually sowing the word to replace what has been caught away by the wicked one will give it a chance to grow. Understanding deepens as you repeatedly hear the same thing. Understanding is always a fruit of repeated reading, repeated listening, repeated studying, repeated discussion and repeated hearing of the same things.

2. You can improve your understanding by taking root downwards.

And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again TAKE ROOT DOWNWARD, and bear fruit upward:

Isaiah 37:31

As you take root downwards, you get away from the wicked one who wants to steal the seed. Allow the word to soak in and sink in. You can allow the word to sink in by staying on the topic long enough, rather than moving onto something new.

Chapter 15

The Fifth Determinant: Skill

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of SKILL; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

1. Skill determines who is chosen.

As for these four children, GOD GAVE THEM KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them TEN TIMES BETTER than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Daniel 1:17-20

The elevation of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego was because of their skill.

Skill determines whether you will be ten times better or not. Skill is the master key to becoming ten times better as a minister or a pastor. Ten times better is a higher version of ministry.

The skill of preaching, the skill of singing and the skill of playing instruments will determine a lot of things about your life. Your skill of personally being able to help will also determine things for you.

2. Skill determines whether you will build a house or not. Skill is the master key to building. Failure to build reveals the lack of practical skills. Impractical men build nothing! Building projects do

not come on because impractical “armchair leaders” are in charge of things.

Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide. Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants,

2 Chronicles 2:7-8

3. Skill is determined by humility and determination to learn something new.

And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: FOR THOU KNOWEST THAT THERE IS NOT AMONG US ANY THAT CAN SKILL TO HEW TIMBER LIKE UNTO THE SIDONIANS. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

1 Kings 5:5-7

Skill is something that requires humility. The humility of associating with another who is better than you in order to learn from him. Without that humility you can never acquire the necessary skills. Without such humility you will never be as wise as Solomon.

4. Skill determines the quality of music you have in your ministry.

And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them

were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all THAT COULD SKILL OF INSTRUMENTS OF MUSICK.

2 Chronicles 34:12

Sing unto him a new song; PLAY SKILFULLY WITH a loud noise.

Psalm 33:3

5. Skill determines how successful you will be at war. Our war is the ministry. Our war is the Christian life. If you don't have practical abilities you will be unable to carry out huge sections of the ministry. You will need the skill of preaching, the skill of writing, the skill of crusading and the skill of church planting.

The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and SKILFUL IN WAR, were four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.

1 Chronicles 5:18

6. Skill determines whether you will be called for, selected or chosen. As you develop your skill, you will find yourself being chosen over and over again. If you can sing, if you can play an instrument, you are always at an advantage.

Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to SEEK OUT A MAN, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

1 Samuel 16:16

7. Skill determines your sudden elevation to places of importance.

Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out A MAN, WHO IS A CUNNING PLAYER ON AN HARP: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee,

that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

And Saul said unto his servants, provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen A SON OF JESSE THE BETHLEHEMITE, THAT IS CUNNING IN PLAYING, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.

Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.

And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, LET DAVID, I PRAY THEE, STAND BEFORE ME; for he hath found favour in my sight.

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

1 Samuel 16:16-23

Chapter 16

The Men of Skill You Can Follow

As for these four children, GOD GAVE THEM KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel 1:17

1. God is skilful and created the world.

So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

Psalms 78:72

2. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were men of skill and were appointed to work directly with the king.

As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ..

And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

Daniel 1:17,19

3. Daniel was a man of skill and was given great visions.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

Daniel 9:22

4. The sons of Reuben and the Gadites were skilful in war.

The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of

Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, were four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.

1 Chronicles 5:18

5. Chenaniah was skilful in singing so he instructed in music.

And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song, because he was skilful.

1 Chronicles 15:22

6. Huram's servant was skilful so he helped to build the temple.

And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of HURAM my father's, The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, SKILFUL TO WORK IN GOLD, AND IN SILVER, IN BRASS, IN IRON, IN STONE, AND IN TIMBER, IN PURPLE, IN BLUE, AND IN FINE LINEN, AND IN CRIMSON; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.

2 Chronicles 2:13-14

Chapter 17

The Sixth Determinant: Time

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but TIME and chance happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

Time determines many things. There are things that are possible just because they are being done at a certain time. When certain things are attempted at the wrong time, they do not work. You may try to start a church at a certain time but it will not work because it is the wrong time.

You may try to write a book but it will not be successful because it is the wrong time.

I remember a brother who started a church in his forties. He really struggled to do witnessing and door-to-door preaching. He seemed to be too old for spiritual activities that required youthfulness and strength. The ministry struggled to grow beyond thirty people. If he had started this church in his twenties, I think it may have had a different outcome. If I were to start my ministry at my current age, I do not think it would have the same impact and level of fruitfulness that it does now.

Time is a strong determinant of many things. A woman has only a short period of fruitfulness. If she waits beyond a certain point, she is likely to struggle to have children. The same man and the same frequency of sexual intercourse may yield nothing, whereas she may have easily become pregnant with the same man five years earlier. Time determines many things and you must always be conscious of time.

1. Time determines whom you will meet in life: the people you will meet and the people you will work with. Jesus was

destined to meet John the Baptist. He needed to meet John the Baptist and interact with him as part of His ministry and calling. Time determined why Elisabeth had delayed in childbearing. Time determined the birth of John the Baptist.

And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Luke 1:36

2. Time determines what you can overcome and for how long you can overcome it.

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

AND WHEN THEY SHALL HAVE FINISHED THEIR TESTIMONY, THE BEAST THAT ASCENDETH OUT OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT SHALL MAKE WAR AGAINST THEM, AND SHALL OVERCOME THEM, AND KILL THEM.

Revelation 11:3-7

3. Time determines the victories you can win.

And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

4. Time determines the hour of death and the hour of other events. The times and seasons of the death of your father determines the unfolding of certain events of your life. Joshua's life changed radically when Moses died. The death of Moses was a signal for the beginning of Joshua's ministry. Every death is a signal for someone's life or ministry to begin.

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Joshua 1:1-2

5. Time determines the beginning of certain phases of your ministry. Jesus had not entered the phase of miracles when His mother requested a miracle. When the time came, Jesus was ready to flow in all kinds of miracles.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? MINE HOUR IS NOT YET COME. His mother saith unto the servants, whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

John 2:1-5

6. Time determines the kind of sacrifice that is expected of you. When the time has not come, certain sacrifices may not be expected of you. However, when the season comes, you will be expected to pay the price for everything.

And Jesus answered them, saying, the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a

corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

John 12:23-25

7. Time determines the beginning of your judgment.

The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of

Matthew 24:50

8. Time determines when certain evils may be successful against you. Maybe in the past, certain works of the devil had no power over you. But when the season changes there are things that may be successful. Evil works differently in different seasons.

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

John 16:32

9. Time determines when it is a good thing to sleep instead of praying and when it is a good time to pray instead of sleeping.

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Matthew 26:45

10. Time determines when certain breakthroughs will take place in the church and in the work of God. Before this time, people were unable to worship God in spirit and in truth. At the right time, true worshippers will be worshipping in spirit and in truth.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such

to worship him.

John 4:23

11. Time determines when you must allow certain privileges and pleasures in your life. Many leaders are mixed up about when to take their privileges. Some leaders assume that the first day of leadership goes along with the great benefits. They are not prepared to let a day go by without discovering what their due is. They consider their job as an elevation and not a responsibility. There are others who also never take their privileges when they should, thus creating another kind of problem. Privileges and pleasures are very time-sensitive.

Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

Ecclesiastes 10:17

12. Time determines when you can bear fruit in a certain way. We all want to bear fruit from day one but that is not how it happens. The fruits will come at the right time. Until then, you will just have to wait. A human child will start walking from nine months onwards but an antelope will walk from day one. There is no one to carry him and he needs to start running immediately.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, THAT BRINGETH FORTH HIS FRUIT IN HIS SEASON; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psalms 1:3

Chapter 18

The Men of Time You Can Follow

Then Jesus said unto them, MY TIME is not yet come: ...

John 7:6

1. Jesus had an understanding of times so he walked wisely.

Then Jesus said unto them, MY TIME is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

John 7:6-8

2. The children of Issachar were men who understood the time and they always knew what to do.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that HAD UNDERSTANDING OF THE TIMES, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

1 Chronicles 12:32

3. Animals know their times and they know when to travel and when to migrate.

Yea, the stork in the heaven KNOWETH HER APPOINTED TIMES; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord. How do ye say, we are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain.

Jeremiah 8:7-8

4. The Jews did not know their time of visitation so they

missed a great move of God.

And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou KNEWEST NOT THE TIME OF THY VISITATION.

Luke 19:44

Chapter 19

The Seventh Determinant: Chance

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and CHANCE happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

Chance is the last determinant and perhaps the most important determinant of all. The word "chance" means an occurrence or a happening. In other words, happenings and occurrences come to all men. What are the sources of the happenings in our lives? What are the sources of the events that unfold in our lives? Through the Bible, we know the sources of many occurrences and happenings in our lives.

Is there anything like chance?

Let us take some of the major happenings of our lives and see why and how these chances, occurrences and happenings took place. Being born into this world, getting sick, having accidents, getting well, experiencing victory, experiencing defeat and even dying, are not unplanned and unpredicted occurrences of coincidence.

Many of the occurrences that shape the lives of mankind can be proved from the Bible to be things that were orchestrated by the invisible hand of God. There are many angels operating in the earth, causing things to happen.

On the outside and to the shallow thinker, all the events of this life look like unplanned accidents. By the revelations of this book, discover for yourself that nothing is unplanned and unprepared for in the eye of God. The minutest detail of your life is under His control and determination.

God Rules in the Affairs of Men

That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that THE MOST HIGH RULETH IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Daniel 4:25

1. The growth of your hair is controlled by God. The minutest detail of your life is controlled by God.

BUT EVEN THE VERY HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD ARE ALL NUMBERED. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 12:7

2. The birth of children is controlled by the Lord.

And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, BEHOLD NOW, THOU ART BARREN, AND BEAREST NOT: BUT THOU SHALT CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

Judges 13:2-5

3. The destruction of Jerusalem was determined spiritually and not by chance.

Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O LORD of hosts, HOW LONG WILT THOU NOT HAVE MERCY ON JERUSALEM and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

Zechariah 1:12

4. Ahab's death was determined spiritually and not by accident. The "accident" of Ahab's death was caused by the determination of the Lord.

Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is IN SAMARIA: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, in the place WHERE DOGS LICKED THE BLOOD OF NABOTH SHALL DOGS LICK THY BLOOD, EVEN THINE.

1 Kings 21:18 –19

So THE KING DIED, AND WAS BROUGHT TO SAMARIA; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; AND THE DOGS LICKED UP HIS BLOOD; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake.

1 Kings 22:37-38

5. Abimelech's deliverance from fornication was orchestrated by the Lord and not by chance.

And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I ALSO WITHHELD THEE FROM SINNING against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Genesis 20: 6

6. Hezekiah recovered from sickness by the intervention of the Lord and not by chance.

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, And said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done

that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, GO, AND SAY TO HEZEKIAH, THUS SAITH THE LORD, THE GOD OF DAVID THY FATHER, I HAVE HEARD THY PRAYER, I HAVE SEEN THY TEARS: BEHOLD, I WILL ADD UNTO THY DAYS FIFTEEN YEARS. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken; Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

Isaiah 38:1-8

7. Job experienced an attack of armed robbers not by chance but because of a satanic invasion.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Job 1:12-15

8. Job experienced a fire that wiped out his business and killed his children. This was not by an accident but by evil spirits moving around and engineering things.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The

Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

Job 1:16-18

9. Job was not sick by coincidence. The sickness of Job caused by satan's attack.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Job 2:3-8

In Conclusion

We must therefore accept the revelation of Ecclesiastes 9:11.

These seven factors are the common determinants of life on earth. Speed, strength, wisdom, understanding, skill , time and chance are the seven commonest determinants. Speed, strength, wisdom, understanding, skill, wisdom and chance are determining the outcome of many things indeed.

This book is a study on the determinants identified by Solomon. It is important to know and understand the determinants identified by King Solomon. It is important to use these determinants to move your life forward. To ignore the power of the determinants is to ignore what usually governs and controls life on this earth.

The Bible is full of God's wisdom and direction for our lives. God's word is a prophecy that you will do well to take heed to. When you take heed to the beautiful scriptures, you will become a wise man indeed.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, which ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEE WISE unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:14-15